

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 14117 121405Z

46

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 PM-04 MMO-04 DHA-02 ORM-01 IO-10

AID-05 OMB-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4677

SECDEF IMMEDIATE

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CINCUSNAVEUR

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS IMMEDIATE

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UNCLAS LONDON 14117

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MAR, SE, US, UK

SUBJ: DIEGO GARCIA EVACUEES

REF: LONDON 14031

1. SEPTEMBER 12 GUARDIAN STORY ON DIEGO GARCIA EVACUEES
SHORT AND GIVEN LESS PROMINENCE ON FRONT PAGE. STORY
CONCENTRATES ALMOST ENTIRELY ON ACTIONS BY SENATORS
CULVER, KENNEDY, AND HUMPHREY TO FORCE FURTHER DISCLOSURE
BY "THE PENTAGON" OF DETAILS OF ALL UNDERTAKINGS INVOLV-
ING THE ISLAND. STORY REPORTS FCO HAS SO FAR DECLINED
TO COMMENT ON SOME SPECIFICS. OTHER LONDON PAPERS HAVE
DROPPED SUBJECT BUT WE UNDERSTAND TELEGRAPH WILL CARRY
ARTICLE IN DIEGO ON SEPTEMBER 14. SO FAR TIMES HAS NOT
CARRIED STORY.

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PAGE 02 LONDON 14117 121405Z

2. RE EVACUEES, FCO IS STANDING BY ITS PRESS GUIDANCE

ISSUED SEPTEMBER 10, WHICH READS AS FOLLOWS:

"DIEGO GARCIA IS PART OF THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO WHICH IS ITSELF PART OF THE BRITISH INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORY ESTABLISHED BY ORDER IN COUNCIL IN 1965. UNDER A PUBLISHED EXCHANGE OF NOTES WITH THE US GOVERNMENT IN 1966, THE TERRITORY WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO MEET THE DEFENCE NEEDS OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS. COMPENSATION FOR THE LOSS OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO AMOUNTING TO POUNDS 3 MILLION WAS PAID TO THE MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT AND IN 1967 THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT BOUGHT OUT THE COMMERCIAL INTERESTS OF THE COMPANY OPERATING THE COCONUT PLANTATIONS ON THE ISLANDS. PLANTATION OPERATIONS WERE CONTINUED BY A COMMERCIAL COMPANY ACTING AS MANAGERS FOR THE BIOT ADMINISTRATION.

"IN 1971 THE PLANTATION ON DIEGO GARCIA WAS CLOSED TO ENABLE THE ISLAND TO BE USED FOR DEFENCE PURPOSES, AS ENVISAGED IN THE 1966 EXCHANGE OF NOTES. OTHER CLOSURES FOLLOWED IN THE OTHER ISLANDS OF THE CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO. THE PEOPLE ON THE ISLANDS AFFECTED WERE MAURITIAN AND SEYCHELLOIS CONTRACT LABOURERS AND THEIR FAMILIES. NONE OWNED PROPERTY ON THE ISLANDS BUT THERE WERE INSTANCES OF FAMILIES WHO HAD WORKED ON A CONTRACT BASIS THERE FOR TWO GENERATIONS. THE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES FLUCTUATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DEMAND FOR THEIR LABOUR. IN 1971 THERE WERE ABOUT 830 PEOPLE OF ALL AGES IN THE ARCHIPELAGO INCLUDING SOME 360 ON DIEGO GARCIA ITSELF.

"THE PLANTATION COMPANY WHICH HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR MOVEMENTS OVER MANY YEARS UNDERTOOK THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EVACUATIONS WHICH THE CLOSURE OF THE PLANTATIONS NECESSITATED. NOT SURPRISINGLY THERE WAS SOME INITIAL RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF THE OLDER PEOPLE ON DIEGO GARCIA TO MOVE. BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT IN THE EVENT ALL WENT WILLINGLY, AND NO COERCION WAS USED. NO BRITISH OR AMERICAN SERVICEMEN WERE INVOLVED.

"THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN VERY CONSCIOUS OF HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS THROUGHOUT AND HAS SINCE 1965 BEEN ON RECORD AS WILLING TO PAY APPROPRIATE COMPENSATION. IN 1973 AGREEMENT WAS REACHED WITH THE MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT WHEREBY HMG PAID POUNDS 650,000 FOR RELIEF AND RESETTLEMENT. INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAD BEEN LIVING IN THE UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 LONDON 14117 121405Z

CHAGOS ARCHIPELAGO IN 1965 BUT HAD SETTLED IN MAURITIUS PRIOR TO THE EVACUATIONS, THE TOTAL NUMBER TO BE COMPENSATED WAS, ACCORDING TO MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT REGISTERS, 1,151. THE MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE 1973 PAYMENT REPRESENTED A FULL AND FINAL DISCHARGE OF HMG'S OBLIGATIONS IN THIS REGARD.

"OR 1 OCTOBER 1974 REPRESENTATIVES OF THOSE CONCERNED PETITIONED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ASKING IT TO INTER-

VE NE WITH THE MAURITIAN GOVERNMENT TO GIVE EACH FAMILY
A PIECE OF LAND, A SEPARATE HOUSE AND JOBS, IN MAURITIUS.
HMG TOOK NOTE OF A STATEMENT MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER
OF MAURITIUS THE FOLLOWING DAY IN WHICH HE DREW ATTENTION
TO THE 1973 AGREEMENT WITH HMG AND CONFIRMED THAT EFFORTS
WERE BEING MADE TO RESETTLE THESE PEOPLE. "

3. RE ISSUE OF LINK BETWEEN AGREEMENT AND POLARIS COSTS,
AS OF 11:00 AM LT, FCO DID NOT HAVE STATEMENT READY.
RICHARDSON

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